

REMARKS

Claims 1-12 are pending in the above application. Claims 2-9 have been withdrawn from consideration.

The Office Action dated December 19, 2006, has been received and carefully reviewed. In that Office Action, claims 1, 11 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by McClanahan, and claims 10-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by JP 2000-297823 ("Kamikawa"). Each of these issues is addressed below, and reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by McClanahan. Claim 1 recites a yoke and shaft coupling structure. The structure includes a yoke having a shaft coupling portion and a shaft receivable in the shaft coupling portion. The Office Action interprets block 12 of McClanahan to be part of McClanahan's shaft. It is respectfully submitted that there is no basis in the record for interpreting block 12 to be a shaft. McClanahan does not suggest that block 12 is ever attached to shaft 16, for example, before block 12 is mounted in stamping 14. One skilled in the art would have no reason to describe block 12 as part of a shaft. Because McClanahan does not show a shaft having a coupling portion with of a fixed projecting portion and a recessed portion for positioning the shaft in an axial direction in both directions along an axis of the shaft, claim 1 is submitted to be allowable over McClanahan.

Claim 1 is further submitted to be allowable over McClanahan because there is no basis for the "new interpretation" of McClanahan being used in the present rejection of claim 1. Specifically, the area 24 of block 12 referred to in the Office Action is a flat wall and in no manner constitutes a "salient portion" or "projecting portion" as recited in claim 1. The area of wall 24 is not projecting under any ordinary meaning of this term. Likewise, the region of stamping 14 between 68 and 70 is merely a flat wall and is not a "recess" under any ordinary meaning of this term. It is therefore respectfully submitted that McClanahan does not show the projecting portion or recess portions recited in claim 1 and that claim 1 is allowable over McClanahan for at least this reason.

If this rejection is maintained, it is respectfully requested that the examiner make of record a reason for interpreting one flat wall as “recessed” and another flat wall as “projecting.” Applicant acknowledges that examiners must give claim terms their broadest reasonable interpretations, but it is noted that such interpretations must be consistent with how those skilled in the art would understand the terms. MPEP 2111. It is not believed that one skilled in the art would refer to the designated structures in McClanahan as either recessed or projecting and therefore the interpretation being used in the Office Action is not consistent with the common meanings of the terms in claim 1.

Claims 10 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by McClanahan. The rejections of claims 10 and 11 also require that block 12 be interpreted as a “shaft” and that two flat regions be described as either projecting or recessed. Claims 10 and 11 are submitted to be allowable over McClanahan for at least the reasons provided above in connection with claim 1.

Claim 12 depends from claim 11 and is submitted to be allowable for at least the same reason as claim 11.

Claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Kamikawa. By the above amendment, claim 10 has been revised to clarify that the fixed projecting portion or recessed portion on the shaft coupling portion of the yoke is for positioning the shaft in both directions along the axis of the shaft. Kamikawa includes a recess that does not position a shaft in both directions along the axis of a shaft as now required by claim 10. Claim 10 as amended is submitted to be allowable over Kamikawa for at least this reason.

Claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Kamikawa. Claim 11, as amended, recites that the shaft coupling portion includes one of a fixed projecting portion and a recessed portion for positioning the shaft in both directions along the axis of the shaft. Claim 11, as amended, is therefore submitted to be allowable over Kamikawa for at least the reasons provided above in connection with claim 10.

Claim 12 depends from claim 11 and is submitted to be allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 11.

CONCLUSION

Each issue raised in the Office Action dated December 19, 2007, has been addressed, and it is believed that claims 1 and 10-12 are in condition for allowance. Wherefore, reconsideration and allowance of these claims is earnestly solicited.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the examiner is respectfully requested to contact Scott Wakeman (Reg. No. 37,750) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.14; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 
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